

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, SY
SUBJECT: ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

REF: A. STATE 22951, B. STATE 18330

1. POLOFF DELIVERED HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT FOR SYRIA JANUARY 31 (FIRST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY) TO NAJDI JAZZAR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION, MFA. POLOFF MADE POINTS REFTEL A. JAZZAR ASKED IF REPORT WAS BEING TRANSMITTED OFFICIALLY BY USG TO SARG. POLOFF CONFIRMED THAT IT WAS BEING TRANSMITTED OFFICIALLY TO INFORM SARG OF A REPORT WHICH WAS BEING SENT TO CONGRESS. JAZZAR THEREUPON OFFICIALLY REJECTED THE REPORT ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS UNWARRANTED INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF SYRIA. POLOFF SAID THAT THE USG DID NOT ACCEPT THAT THIS WAS UNWARRANTED INTERVENTION SINCE SARG WAS A SIGNATORY TO VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS AND THEREBY RECOGNIZED THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN HUMAN RIGHTS.

2. JAZZAR SAID SARG TOOK POSITION THAT USG SHOULD FOCUS ON GROSS VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. SY
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WERE FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOMES AND ON THE VIOLATIONS WHICH ISRAEL HAS PERPETRATED DURING ITS OCCUPATION OF THE ARAB TERRITORY SEIZED IN 1967. POLOFF REPLIED THAT USG'S CONCERN FOR PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND ACTIVITIES OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION WAS WELL-DOCUMENTED IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND IN THE UN. IN ADDITION, USG IS AND HAS BEEN UNDERTAKING MAJOR EFFORTS TO BRING PEACE TO THE AREA. THERE SHOULD BE NO QUESTION IN SARG'S

MIND AS TO USG PRIORITIES. NONETHELESS USG CONSIDERS HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLES AS A MAJOR CONCERN. POLOFF POINTED OUT THAT RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS SHOULD BE OF DEEP CONCERN TO ANY INDIVIDUAL SINCE HIS OWN INTEREST AND WELL-BEING ARE ULTIMATELY AT STAKE.

3. JAZZAR, SPEAKING UNOFFICIALLY, SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, NO MATTER IN WHAT CONTEXT, ARE IMPORTANT. HOWEVER, THE QUESTION OF A FEW ISOLATED CASES OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA, WHICH CROP UP AS A RESULT OF THE PROPAGANDA OF SYRIA'S ENEMIES AND ARE BASED ON NOTHING MORE THAN UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONDBN CANNOT BE CONSIDERED ON THE SAME LEVEL AS THE CONSISTENT VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF AN ENTIRE PEOPLE. JAZZAR SAID THAT BY PREPARING AND RAISING THIS REPORT FOR DISCUSSION IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS THE USG WAS ENDANGERING THE HOPES SYRIA HAS FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY AT THIS VERY SENSITIVE PERIOD.

4. POLOFF POINTED OUT ONCE AGAIN THAT PREPARATION OF THE REPORT IS LEGISLATED BY CONGRESS AND APPLIES TO 109 COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. POLOFF SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BLACKEN THE NAME OF SYRIA IN THE US BY MAKING ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THE BEST WAY TO AVOID THIS IS TO ENGAGE IN FRANK AND NON-POLEMIC DISCUSSIONS OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED AND WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS DO NOT GO UNCHALLENGED. OTHERWISE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SYRIA WOULD BE PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO DISCREDIT IT.

5. JAZZAR ASKED WHEN THIS REPORT WOULD BE DISCUSSED BY CONGRESS. POLOFF SAID HE THOUGHT DEPARTMENT'S TESTIMONY ON THE AID PROGRAMS WOULD BE GIVEN IN MID-FEBRUARY AND IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT REPORTS LIKE THIS ONE WOULD BE OPEN FOR DISCUSSIONS. JAZZAR ASKED THAT POLOFF LEAVE THE COPY OF THE REPORT WITH HIM INFORMALLY AND ASKED THAT HE BE ADVISED OF THE RESULTS OF ANY CONGRESSIONAL DISCUSSIONS ON THIS ISSUE PERTAINING TO SYRIA.

6. REQUEST DEPARTMENT FURNISH US WITH COPY OF ANY TESTIMONY RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN SYRIA WHICH WE CAN PROVIDE TO MFA. PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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